

and disinterestedness by which they rose to power, was thrown aside; and then they depended on Sicily, Egypt and Africa for bread.

The Chinese empire has subsisted the longest of any that is recorded in history; and the wisdom displayed in its policy is admired by Europeans in this enlightened period. In China, every possible encouragement is given to agriculture, which is so necessary to feed fifty millions of people—the lowest number, at which the population of that empire is estimated. Among various methods to promote industry and encourage agriculture in China, one is—that the Emperor, accompanied by his court, goes every year into the field and plows; he sows the land which he has plowed; and when the grain is ripe, he reaps it with his own hand. All the nobles follow the Emperor's example; and this spirit is diffused through every subordinate class of men.

It would take up too much time to specify the steps that have been taken in modern Europe for the advancement of agriculture. I shall only observe in general, that as Europe emerged from barbarism; and literature was cultivated—as the inhabitants of any state became enlightened, saw their true interest, and adopted maxims of sound policy, agriculture was proportionably encouraged. Hence chiefly it is, that we no longer hear of those desolating famines in Europe, which formerly swept off thousands. The partial dearths that sometimes happen, through unfavourable seasons, are speedily relieved by supplies from other districts or countries that were more favoured.

Within these few years, *professors of rural economics* having been established in several European universities, whose business is to teach the principles of agriculture systematically and considered as a science, great benefits may be expected from those establishments; and I would humbly beg leave to recommend the example to the attention of those gentlemen who are intrusted with the government of our public seminary. A *professor of rural economics*, at King's College, might be of infinite service to this province.

In Great-Britain, the most unwearied exertions have been made, for a century past, to promote this useful art. Several acts of parliament were passed for its encouragement. Men of the first character, eminent for their abilities, and of independent fortune, not only employed their pens, to elucidate the subject; but they also applied themselves with ardour to make experiments for its improvement. Societies were formed; and the collected

information derived from the members of those societies, and their numerous correspondents was communicated to the public. Hereby knowledge was widely spread; a spirit of industry was excited; husbandry, in its various branches, was carried on systematically, and on right principles. The same measures are still zealously pursued, and with increasing success. The result is such as might be naturally expected—the farmer is amply repaid for his labour; the nation is abundantly supplied with provisions, which give a spring to commerce and manufactures; and great quantities of provisions, of every kind, are annually exported. From England, the export of wheat in one year lately, was *one million, two hundred and twenty six thousand, seven hundred and forty-four bushels*; the bounty on which, amounted to 72,433*l.* besides barley, malt and rye. What a fund of wealth is this? How decided a proof of the benefits resulting from agriculture, when well conducted!

This detail may serve to evince, in what high estimation agriculture has been held by the wisest nations; and of how much importance it is to the prosperity of every country. These ideas, or such as these, were, doubtless, strongly impressed on the minds of those public-spirited gentlemen, who formed your society. They knew the advantages of skilful husbandry, and wished their fellow-citizens might partake of them. They are intitled to the thanks of every inhabitant. There is an ample field for their exertions in Nova-Scotia; for in few countries is the assistance of such a society more wanted, and few, where it may be of more advantage. Proceed then with ardour in your laudable design; and perfect, by patient perseverance, what you have, with so much public spirit, begun.

So far as respects myself, I shall most cheerfully contribute, all that is in my power, to forward the benevolent purpose of your society; and it is impossible to think favourably of any man who withholds the help he can give—he must be a bad member of the community. I have much to offer, concerning agriculture; but am unwilling to trouble you with too much at one time. Should this little essay, on the general subject, meet the society's approbation, I shall hereafter enter occasionally into minuter details of matters which, I conceive, are interesting to the execution of your scheme.

In the mean time, I have the honour to be, with much esteem and respect, for you and the society,

Sir, your very humble servant,
Nov. 25, 1789. COLUMELLA.